



Pitti Gallery, Florence.]

THE MADONNA AND CHILD.

[Murillo.



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Franz Josef and Fr. Ignatius Spencer.

THE recent death of the aged Emperor of Austria, an almost tragic close in its circumstances to a long and troubled reign, found little sympathetic record in the Press of these countries. He died the foe of Great Britain, and obituaries were written to order. Had there been less need to keep an eye on that all-important fact a little justice and even generosity might have mingled with the estimates of a ruler who was once brought to heel by the Sinn Fein policy of his

Hungarian subjects. As it was, the shadows were deepened and the lights dimmed in the posthumous portraits drawn of him for public exhibition. The usual tendency to conceal the wart was changed into an effort to show him all wart. This is not the place nor this the time to revise these estimates, but the circumstances, we think, give a new and enhanced interest to an incident in the life of the saintly English Passionist, Father Ignatius Spencer. The modern movement for the conversion of England to the Catholic faith was set on foot by Father Ignatius, whose name is now rarely mentioned in that country in connection with it. But that there exists at all a movement for the conversion of England instead of the conversion of Egypt, for instance, is due almost solely to his zealous life-work. For that he lived and in that he died. In furtherance of the object which so obsessed him, his burning zeal carried him all over the European continent to interview and interest all whose co-operation he thought worth having. Pope and cardinals, emperors, kings and princes, bishops and ecclesiastics of every degree, religious of both sexes, and the institutes and schools under their care—all were visited by him in turn and urged to work or pray, or at least to allow others to work and pray, in promotion of the great work upon which he deemed the regeneration of the world depended. Four several times he visited Germany, and on one or more of these occasions he made an excursion into Austria. He found himself in the latter country in the early part of 1852, after leaving Rome with papal approbation of his campaign for England's conversion. Among the persons in high places who befriended him in Austria was a Count O'Donnell, probably a descendant of one of the "Wild Geese." His interview with the young Emperor and the impression it left with him is best told in his own words:—

"While at Rome, I heard one day the wonderful account of the *coup d'état* of the now Emperor of the French. I thought with myself that moment, here is a man for me—perhaps *the* man. If he survive the assaults of his enemies, and become established in power over France, he is the man evidently for great designs: the people whom he rules are the people to follow him in them; and he has a mind, so I conceived, to understand how utterly insignificant are all enterprises in comparison with those which have the glory of God and the salvation of souls for their end. . . . I got an introduction to the French ambassador at Rome, in order to open my way to an interview with his chief. This may be in reserve for me some future day: but I was first to see another great man—the young Emperor of Austria.

"I think an account of this audience and some accompanying circumstances will be interesting in more points of view than one. After leaving Rome in the beginning of February [1852], I went to Vienna, and stopped there three weeks before coming home. The Emperor had just left Vienna for Venice when I arrived, and did not return for a fortnight after. In conse-

quence of this, I sought for, and had audience of all the other members of the royal family then in the town. Many may not be aware of the circumstances under which the present emperor was raised to the throne. Everything connected with this young man is to me full of a kind of poetic interest. He is the eldest son of the Archduke Francis Charles and the Archduchess Sophia, a princess of Bavaria. His father is brother to the ex-Emperor Ferdinand.

"It is said that in 1848, at the time when the insurgents had gained possession of Vienna and the court was in flight, some one asked the Empress Maria Anna, a Sardinian princess, 'Madam, have you ever thought of an abdication?' 'I have indeed,' answered she, 'but what is to follow?' The emperor had no children, and his next heir was his brother, the Archduke. Both of them have been always highly respected as most amiable and religious men, but are not of abilities or character to bear the charge of an empire under such circumstances. The abdication, then, of the reigning emperor would not have been a remedy to existing evils, unless his brother joined in the sacrifice of his claims and made way for the succession of his son. This arrangement, however, was effected: and if what I gathered from conversations and observation is correct, it is to the two ladies whom I have mentioned that the empire is indebted for it. . . . Be this as it may, the announcement was made to the young prince, then eighteen years of age, that the crown was his. It is said that he burst into tears at hearing it and begged two days for reflection, during which he went to confession and Communion to obtain light from God, and concluded by giving his consent. His career has been conformable with this beginning. Among other things, I may mention that one of his first acts was, of his own mind, to appeal the oppressive laws of Joseph II., and to restore liberty to the Church. Could I do otherwise than love to interest such a soul as this in the great cause I was supporting? Shall I succeed in the bud? I had an audience of the Archduchess Sophia, the emperor's mother, before his return from Venice. It was under her care and guidance, as I was assured, that his character has been formed, and it was touching to hear her make me a kind of apology for what might, perhaps, be taken as a defect in his manner. She said, 'You will certainly obtain it,' and she added, 'You will perhaps think him cold, but he is not so.' This corresponds with what she said to a friend of mine, a German literary character, who was likewise about to have his first audience of the emperor. The Archduchess said to him, 'His manner is not winning like that of Carl [meaning her third son, the Archduke Charles], but he has greater depth of character: from his childhood upwards I never knew him to say a word merely to please; every word is from his heart.' These few words of his mother are to me a most precious comment on what passed between the Emperor and me when I had my audience.

"I was introduced into a large salon on one of the days of public reception. The Emperor stood alone in the middle of it: behind him, to the left, was a small table, on which was a pile of memorials which he had already received. He was in military uniform. I should be glad to convey the impression which his appearance and the few words he spoke made on me. A young Emperor, I suppose, has great advantage in gaining upon one's feelings, if he will in any degree do himself justice. In this case, I say that I was never more satisfied, not to say captivated, with my observations on any person. His figure is not in itself commanding; but there was in his air and manner and tone a union of grace and affability, dignity, wisdom, and modesty, which I do not remember to have seen equalled. I was greatly struck, on my entrance, with what appeared to me such a contrast between what I witnessed and the receptions usually given by great personages who wish to be gracious. Ordinarily, my impression is that they overwhelm one with many words which often mean nothing. The Emperor was perfectly silent. I had time to think with myself, after I had approached him, 'Am I then to speak first?' So it was. I have a very clear recollection of what was said.

"I have requested this audience," I said, "to represent to your Majesty the object for which I am travelling. It is to move Catholics throughout the world to interest themselves in obtaining the return of my country to the Catholic faith. On this I am deeply convinced depends the happiness of my country; and, I conceive, nothing would more contribute to the happiness of other nations of the world."

"The Emperor seemed to intimate assent to this, and said with great grace: 'I am happy to hear that things go on better in England in regard to religion than they have done.'

"There is much," I said, "to encourage hopes: but we want great help. I am come to ask the help of Austria. I do not take on me to prescribe what your Majesty in person might do in this cause. As the principal means is prayer, I am aware that it belongs rather to the bishops to direct such movements; but I ask help and sympathy from all. I thought it could not be anything but right to ask your Majesty."

"He answered: 'I will interest myself as much as possible.'

"I added: 'I have said, I did not intend to propose any line of action to your Majesty; but I may explain myself further. It is to the bishops that I made my principal appeal to interest the people in this object. Now, I am aware that they would and must be averse to any public measures which might seem to involve political inconvenience. I would, therefore, ask of your Majesty, that if the bishops are pleased to act, the government should not object to it, as I conceive there would be no reason.'

"The Emperor said something to the effect, as I thought, that he saw no reason to object to what I said.

"I was aware that my audience could not be a long one, and I now put my hand to the breast of my habit to take out a

FRANZ JOSEF AND FR. IGNATIUS.

memorial, which I had been directed to present on this occasion, for permission to collect subscriptions in the empire.

"He thought I was about to offer him papers on the subject on which I had been speaking, and said: 'You probably have some papers which will explain your wishes.'

"I said: 'I have; but they are not in a becoming form to present to your Majesty.'

"I had, in fact, two little addresses printed on poor paper, in German, for distribution, and I brought them forward.

"He immediately put out his hand to take them, and said with a smile and manner of truly high-bred courtesy: 'Oh! I will read them,' and he laid them on the table by him.

"I then presented my written memorial, and then, on his bowing slightly to me, I withdrew."

Whether the interview was as fruitful of effects as Father Ignatius hoped may be open to doubt. His narrative, however, leaves a pleasant impression of the character and manners of the young Emperor. The heart that beat under that military uniform may not have throbbed with such enthusiastic hopes of England's conversion as fired the heart of this saintly man with the rusty black habit and the confident speech; but Father Ignatius had at least ensured that his propaganda would not be unwelcome in the Austrian dominions. The Emperor's attention was engrossed by more pressing and more worldly things.

"The Sacrament of the Moment."

Like every other sacrament,
This, of God's holy will,
Has matter, form and ministrant,
And manner to fulfil.

His watchful Providence supplies
The matter, hour by hour,
The form and ministration lies
In anybody's power.

The blessing for the pure in heart
In just this simple thing . . .
Devotion to God's will, apart
From what its ruling bring.

This is the Manna day by day
Found fresh upon life's sod,
To feed and strengthen on the way
To the Promised Land of God.

MOTHER ST. JEROME.

The New Year.

ONCE again the old year has sobbed itself to sleep—it has taken away all its trials and sorrows, all its clouds and storms for ever. Think of that: we shall never see this old year again—and, indeed, most of us will be full of gratitude that the curtain is drawn at last. And yet, should we be so positive that the year was *all* sad? I think not. No matter what has happened—even the heinous atrocities of the human race outside the shores of civilization—even having experienced the attempt to kill truth and honour themselves, and the terrible havoc and death, for during that year individual good has been gained for each—perhaps through sorrow—but ultimate good has ensued. The *Te Deum* every year on New Year's Eve is a *sine qua non*; we all know the lines we personally find are easiest to sing, what petition we most earnestly plead for. Let us, however, not mourn for the dying, but welcome the new, young life just born, and keep our thoughts and aspirations for its opening.

There is something so truly beautiful in beginning anything, a quite refreshing, cooling, bracing element entirely its own. In any walk in life, at any time, the *start* is inspiring—probably pricked with fear now and again—but hope we allow to overcome these pricks. First and foremost, then, is the idea of novelty, not in its frivolous, distraction-hunting sense, but renewal, upheaval of old foundations; the laying of new, the happy light, and rising sense of newness, like the Easter of the ecclesiastical year—a resurrection from the swaddling clothes of mouldy, torn garments which the age of inertia has allowed to remain.

Is there not a buoyancy in the air when a soul knows that, as far as it can, it has really begun again? This spiritual elation, when on a strong foundation, is beyond all imaginable joys—it is the renewal of life, the renaissance of dead joy, the budding ecstasy of the purest flowers. It is only realised when all the plans have been laid, and the firm convictions formed and the yearning aspirations expressed that we realise what a refreshing, optimistic view it gives one of the dingy world around us, of the people, the contrary influences we meet and seem to be always cannoning against. I heard a brilliant man once say: "Does it not make the whole world lovely?" Each new year is of the nature of this spiritual beginning.

It has its tragedy, its comedy, its farce; it has its beauty, its pathos, its bitterness, but above all, it has hope, hope in spite of everything, hope even though the curtains be heavy and great before the coming days, even though the whispers are many and ominous of the Job's comforters, who for ever come to lower the tone of the would-be happy people.

If hope is watered and energized by the new year, it augurs well for the close. A timid venture is half a defeat, and a man

who is for ever peeping for bogies behind the fence will be found at the end of the year prostrate at the foot of the fence, like the poor craven he is. As Chesterton says: "There is no such thing as fighting on the winning side: one fights to find out which is the winning side." And so hope, with the weapon of prayer on New Year's morning, looks down the year to come with manifold courage and self-reliance so grandly and so simply expressed by Emerson: "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles."

Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., in his open-armed and watchful kindness for poor human creatures, when speaking of the many broken resolutions of last year which worry us so terribly when the clock strikes twelve on New Year's Eve, comforts us by saying: "You and I have broken so many resolutions that we may start with a dull sense of hopelessness. But this is not quite fair to ourselves . . . some little resolution blessed by God may grow up into the Kingdom of Heaven. . . . In this new year, when kneeling at the feet of the First-born, ask Him to give us a first-born resolution, very fragile, very delicate and small, swathed in swaddling clothes, lest it should go to pieces, yet so living that it would form our redemption and our eternal reward."

This year will be one of vast import to the whole world—national, universal—and we can hardly estimate the momentous issues—and yet, miracle of miracles, it will either be like a mosaic of great beauty and perfection, an indifferently inlaid pattern with missing pieces of varied import, or it will be of workmanship so shameful that the after-year will be affected by its heavy lapses. What are those little pieces? Men and women working well or ill. The Cosmos is a great thing, but it is no greater than the individual soul. One year is like a breath-mark on the glass of Eternity—but each soul is worth the price of God's death.

The new year comes so soon after Christmas that our Little Child in the Crib was only eight days old, and He is the Way, the Truth, the Life. He showed us the new year's hope, the new year's love, the new year's glorious end—for His life was one long new year. No one had hope till His little breath came warm on Mary's cheek. No love could ever surpass that burning heart of His, for He loved till His sacred sigh on Calvary told the world that His life had gone and the world thought it the *end*. But Magdalene, our sister in new year failures, our sister in new year's strength to the end, Magdalene saw Him as He longs to see us in the loveliest new year of all—when resolutions, and plans, endeavours and struggles shall cease and we shall "Cease upon the midnight with no pain."

EDITH PEARSON.

The Late Mr. Fahy.

Flood-Tide.

(To JAMES CONNOLLY.)

At last, at last, flowed in the tide—
 Past was the waiting and the fear,
 The dread that weakness might decide,
 And on the rocks the brave ship steer,
 Or else in stagnant waters leave
 Her, anchored, shamed beyond reprieve.

Past is the waiting, dead the fear,
 Ere ebbed the tide the ship sailed out,
 She was not built for Fate so drear,
 Her place the sea's wild rush and rout.
 Scant was she manned, but brave the crew
 That from her mast her colours flew.

Out to the raging storm they rode,
 And dealt their blow at England's heart,
 Whilst o'er their land the old Truth flowed,
 Blessed were their names in street and mart,
 When, storm-tossed, proud, the ship came back,
 Glory and Victory in her track.

But some that sailed came back no more,
 Yet were they envied who thus died,
 And those who mourned beside the shore,
 Wept less for sorrow than for pride.
 With each one's grief there too was blent
 Joy, Gratitude, and Wonderment.

And you whose watch was on the bridge,
 Upon your soul a great joy shone,
 That safely o'er the last Wave's ridge
 The ship you helped to steer had gone—
 I know where'er you journey now
 Victory's smile is on your brow.

MAEVE CAVANAGH.

BARTLE FAHY was by profession a cattle doctor, and of late he had been continually bewailing what he called the hard times. "What with the war, and no sick cattle," was the burden of his song, "the country will be ruined." Yet the abnormal health of bullocks could not wholly explain Mr. Fahy's straitened circumstances. One must admit that the publichouse would eat up, or, more correctly, Mr. Fahy would drink, most of his earnings. But though his wife's constant anger was justifiable, the sternest of moralists would not condemn Bartle to the fate which finally overtook him.

It began with the circular from the Insurance Company which prompted Mrs. Fahy's hint that he might "drownd" himself and leave his wife in ease and peace. This suggestion roused no enthusiasm in her husband until it developed into the more reasonable proposition that he should insure himself, "purtend to drownd" himself, and return with an assured income to live a happy and pious old age. It were an insult to temptation not to fall sometimes. Mr. Fahy fell. Not so easily though as might be imagined, for his natural intelligence suggested to him many obstacles in the path towards affluence. For instance, how was the money for the premium to be riz? His mind wrestled in vain with this problem until Providence and his wife solved it thus. There ensued, to the wonder of neighbours, a term of unwonted sobriety for Bartle, and, to his delight, there ensued also quite an epidemic of sickness among the neighbouring cattle, so that he made a deal of money and insured himself.

Mr. Fahy's reformation was not wholly voluntary. His temperance may be explained by the fact that his wife interviewed in person the owners of sick cattle and by painting in sombre colours the starvation of her home and the thirst of her husband induced them to hand over to her the major portion of his earnings. Further, she kept Bat strictly out of bad company, by which she meant entirely in her own. In short, she watched him. The sudden delicacy which manifested itself among the cattle of the district is not so easily explainable, unless we accept Bartle's devout theory that it was due to the intervention of Divine Providence, but this will hardly be accepted by the dispassionate critic.

Be that as it may, the money was raised, the premium was paid, the policy safe, and preparations went merrily forward for the final attack on the strong box of the Insurance Company. In the meantime Mrs. Fahy busied herself in mysteriously disfiguring Bartle's oldest and most forgotten coat. Her method was simple. She merely patched it up with cloths of divers shapes and startling hues, and, arrayed in it, her husband was almost unrecognisable. It was already late summer, and Bat's death would now be a lucrative one.

So one night he made a furtive, darkling visit to the sea shore, carrying away a parcel and returning home empty-handed. The parcel contained a complete change of clothing, including the motley garment on which Mrs. Fahy had been experimenting, and also some food with which to stave off the immediate pangs of a hunger which both man and wife evidently expected would attack Bartle immediately after his decease. Next evening, then, he stowed in his pocket a razor, a piece of soap, and a small looking-glass, slung a towel round his neck, and prepared to set out for death.

"Good-bye, now," said Mrs. Fahy, and she added with unseemly levity. "Pray to St. Joseph."

The subtlety of this appeal to the Patron of a happy death was quite lost on her husband, who had fallen into gloom. He merely said "Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Mrs. Fahy again, and even in that crisis she could not refrain from commenting on her husband's personal appearance.

"Good-bye," she said, "and don't forget to shave off your moth-eaten beard."

Bartle looked at her in silent reproach.

"Yerra keep yer heart up," she said, cheerfully. "You're going to earn an honest penny for the first time in your life."

Fahy had nothing to say to this impious sarcasm. He went out.

At this moment it struck Mrs. Fahy, who must have had a fine dramatic instinct, that it would be unnatural if her husband departed without a spoken word. For the benefit of the neighbours she walked to the door and called after him—

"Don't dirty the sea, like ye dirtied me basin."

But she got a surprise. Bartle, craftily conscious of the strength of his position, ventured, for the first time in his life, to answer back. In her mingled astonishment and indignation at this unexpected affront Mrs. Fahy only caught something about "your own dirty mug," but it was enough. Art gave place to nature, and she seized the first thing that came to her hand, which happened to be a creepy stool, by the leg and hurled it after him. It missed him—luckily, as she reflected afterwards, or she would never have got the insurance money; and this passage had quite a happy result, as it brought the neighbours to their doors and established beyond question the fact that Bartholomew Fahy had really gone to bathe on the evening of the twenty-sixth. The news caused quite a diversion in the village as an unprecedented event, and Bat walked very sheepishly down the road in the direction of "the salt."

Mrs. Bartle, when her anger cooled, felt she had every reason to be satisfied. Nobody, she flattered herself, would recognise in the shaven stranger, clothed in that startling costume, her own unobtrusive husband, even if he chanced to be seen in the vicinity. Her dramatic instinct, too, suggested to her for a moment that the neighbours, hearing the news of

Bartle's death, might put it down to suicide, the result of her own harsh behaviour, but she was a woman of strong sense and dismissed this idea as improbable.

As for Bartle, he reached the beach by a very roundabout journey, and on the way picked up the parcel which he had cached the night before. He finally came up behind a sand-bluff and looked down on the strand from above. It was deserted and inexpressibly lonely. It was now twilight, too, and the sea looked strangely grey and cold. To make matters worse, the tide was very far out, and between him and it there intervened a dreary waste of sand and pebbles. Directly beneath him was a cave, or rather a little hollow in the bluff, known locally as "the bathing box." It had been Bartle's intention to divest himself of his garments, take a brief dip in the sparkling waves, don the other clothes, and, in the words of the cinema theatre, "light out for solitude." Only the waves were not sparkling. First, however, the conspirator shaved himself as well as he could in the fading light. Thus transformed he removed his clothes and, stepping warily forth, he placed them in a bundle, well above high-water mark in an ostentatious position and secured them with a few large stones. But he felt strangely reluctant to face the long stretch of shingly beach in his bare feet. He squatted down on the sand and shivered. A pair of scapulars is but a poor protection against a chill evening breeze, even in summer, and the poor bather's teeth began to chatter audibly. His face, too, was very sore, from shaving with the cold salt water which he had found in the crevice of a near-by rock. Altogether he was extremely miserable, and finally he withdrew to the cave, where he donned his other garments. He felt uncomfortably conspicuous in the coat, but there was no doubt he was slightly warmer. By the time he had slipped out of the darkening cave and run a couple of hundred yards he was in quite a glow. But he did not pause. Before morning he was twenty miles away, and next night he was fifty miles away, and dog-tired.

Mrs. Fahy, when her husband failed to return home, went out with a great show of anxiety to rouse the neighbours and make inquiries. She appeared quite distracted, and, as another of her fine dramatic touches, declared that he must have been at "his old game." The only information the poor creature got was that a little boy had followed Mr. Fahy down to the sea to verify the incredible rumour that he had actually gone to bathe. This piece of news, you may be sure, did little to soothe the feelings of the tortured lady, and even when it turned out that the little chap had been frightened home by the loneliness of the beach before, as he thought, Mr. Fahy "got in," even still Mrs. Fahy bore this innocent child a life-long grudge, and ever after persisted in predicting the gibbet as his only possible destination.

With daylight, of course, the clothes were discovered by Constable Ryan, who, all-important, brought them round to Mrs. Fahy's cottage, followed by a meandering string of sympathisers. In life neither Bartle nor Katty had been peculiarly popular, but now the dead man's virtues grew and his vices dwindled in proportion. Constable Ryan, who was a tactless man, broke the news as gently as he could to Mrs. Fahy, and suggested that Bartle was much happier in his grave. Indeed the sympathy of all tended to conceal a sting. The commonest remark was, "Ye wouldn't mind, now, if he was in the habit of bathing, or even washing himself; but to do it once and be drownded;" and the answer, "Ay, indeed, the dear knows he was a shockin' dirty man."

Constable Ryan, though he thought an inquest might have to be held on the clothes, was so vague about it that he handed them to Mrs. Fahy.

"Tell her how you found them, sergeant," said a voice, raising Constable Ryan a grade or two in the force, as is our courteous custom. "Didn't ye see somethin' while on the sand?" continued the same voice, eager for harrowing details.

"I did not," said the guardian of the peace, who saw the story, his lawful property, being filched from him. "I did not," he repeated, tactlessly; "I saw his shirt."

Mrs. Fahy restrained herself.

"And I found a lot of hair, and a bit of soap, so there must have been someone with yer husband, ma'am—".

But Mrs. Fahy evidently took little interest in detective work. In a choking voice (due obviously to sorrow) she requested to be left alone with her grief. She was.

However, grief had its consolations. It was not very long before the insurance company, after a lot of what she considered unnecessarily searching inquiries, forwarded the handsome sum due on her husband's policy, and then ensued a term of opulence beyond the brightest of Mrs. Fahy's dreams.

But grief had also its duties. A wake was out of the question. It is not surprising that the body of the deceased cattle-doctor had not been discovered, though the seashore about the bathing-place had since his death been fringed with a border of expectant little boys ghoulishly waiting for flotsam and jetsam. But there wasn't as much as a bone washed up to these disappointed watchers. When it became evident that if anything of Bartle were discovered it would be merely the skeleton, his widow decided to wake the last mortal shroud of her husband's body.

And she did. The clothes were laid out decently on the bed, and Mrs. Fahy, resplendent in mourning, presided. There was a goodly gathering of neighbours, and the widow's bereavement did not interfere with her hospitality. It was an unorthodox wake. Speeches were the order of the night, speeches which dwelt pathetically on deceased's virtues and in some cases dwelt pathetically on his possible habitation. Constable Ryan distinguished himself. He was accustomed to use long words, sometimes, one must admit, misplaced. In

this case he wound up a long passage of magnificent rhodomontade with—

"And think of the fine young man we all knew so well—smoulderin' in the grave. But there's no use cryin' over spilt milk."

This broke up the festivities, or the obsequies, and the guests departed. Katty's house boasted two doors, a front and a back, which, though draughty, was distinctly fashionable. The last mourner had hardly left the front door when a figure insinuated itself into the kitchen through the back. It was the late Mr. Fahy. During his funeral games, like a ghost revisiting the glimpses of the moon, he had been prowling round the premises. The opulence of his former dwelling took him quite by surprise. Could this nicely white-washed mansion, with new painted windows, be the home wherein he had suffered penury and drought? It would seem that even a spirit cannot exist comfortably on short rations. At that moment the late Mr. Fahy was decidedly hungry, and when he heard his widow dismissing his mourners—an experience which is not given to everybody—he stole furtively into the kitchen, rubbing his hands in anticipation of this abundance. His widow's back was turned and he coughed gently to attract her attention. Though he gave her quite a surprise, she recovered herself in no time.

"Good evening, Katty," remarked the ghost, with a jovial smile.

Katty looked at him.

"Who might you be?" she asked coldly.

It was Bartle's turn to be surprised.

"Are ye jokin', Katty?" he inquired, but his smile had vanished.

"Don't call me Katty," said his wife. "How dare ye be so familiar! I don't know ye."

"Ye don't know me?" he gasped. But even to Bartle's dull wit the truth was becoming only too clear. "Ye mean," said he, "ye're goin' to swindle me out of me hard earning."

"Ye're very like me poor husband," said Mrs. Fahy, musingly; "but of course he's dead. He went out of this and said he was goin' to purtend to drown himself. But he med a mistake, and drowned himself sure enough."

"No, nor even wet himself," interposed the late Mr. Fahy.

Katty did not seem to hear him.

"I knew a Mr. Dunne," she continued, "that insured himself and purtended to drown himself. He got twenty year. But I'm keeping you, sir," she added briskly.

It would be clear to the meanest intellect that he was out-staying his welcome, yet her visitor made no movement to go.

"Katty," he began, desperately.

And then a strange thing happened. Katty opened her mouth slowly and uttered, not one, but three appalling yells.

"What's wrong?" inquired Bartle, anxiously.

His wife addressed herself to the wall.

"The polis will be here in a minute," she remarked.

It is not widely known that ghosts, those airy and evanescent beings, are within the reach of temporal law, yet this one seemed to have quite a terrestrial fear of a meeting with Constable Ryan. Through the open half-door came the sound, not of the crowing cock, but of running footfalls on the hard road. They came nearer and nearer. The extravagant and erring spirit looked round him desperately and finally bolted. The back door had hardly shut behind him when Constable Ryan rushed up, breathless, to the front.

"What is it, ma'am?" he panted. "What's up?"

Mrs. Fahy, true to her dramatic instinct, was leaning against the wall, clutching with both hands her beautiful mourning skirt.

"'Twas nothing, sergeant," she sighed. "I thought I seen a ghost."

Before Constable Ryan could comfort her she went on:

"Ye might take a look round the house, sergeant."

These words must be looked upon as an incantation or exorcism. They were instantly followed by the sound of retreating footsteps in the yard.

"Indeed, sergeant," whimpered Mrs. Fahy, "when you've nothing particular to do, ye might keep near the house." And here she wiped away a furtive tear. "I'm a poor, lone widda woman now, sergeant; and," she wailed, "I've no one to leave me money to."

Here was clearly an object for Constable Ryan's sympathy. Not only that night, but the next day and the next night, and for months after, he kept Mrs. Fahy's house under his eye until the ghost was either laid or fled his haunts. In fact, they grew so friendly that it was a wonder to the neighbours that the Widow Fahy and Constable Ryan didn't get married, though all admitted that "she could be his mother," and they are unanimous that she will leave him "a good thing."

But if "Sergeant Ryan" is a wise man, he will not count too sanguinely on a legacy.

Mrs. Fahy is quite capable of buying an annuity.

OWEN DOLAN.

A Correction.

The poem *Invocation*, which appeared in our October issue, was by a regrettable mistake not attributed to its real author. The writer was not Edmund De Valera, but John E. Lyons, one of the Irish prisoners at Frongoch.

The Latin Glamour.

I HAVE just spent a delicious hour in a world of which the very memory is lost, except where its faint afterglow still lingers in sequestered valleys, or little towns which the strident nineteenth century has left unspoiled. It is the world of which Ruskin dared to dream, which William Morris spent his life in a vain endeavour to recall, and which is woven into the warp and woof of the poetry of Francis Thompson and Lionel Johnson. It is the world which greets us in Millet's paintings or in the stories of René Bazin—a world of simple faith and tranquil days and hearts that keep alight the fires of youth till the very fire of life is extinguished. It is the world of the ages of Faith, of the middle ages. Something of the magic of that old-world remains in the valleys of Brittany and Normandy and Provence, but nowhere does its fragrance linger so strongly as in the mountains and dells of Italy, remote from the stress and storm of things. I have to thank a priest-poet, Rev. Henry E. G. Rope, for the privilege of wandering for a little ecstatic while in an age so unlike our own, and which makes one ask whether, for all its vaunted progress in purely material things, the twentieth century may not yet feel impelled to kneel at the feet of the fifteenth for the secret of true principles of living and progress. In this world to which Father Rope has introduced me in his little book of poems, *Religionis Ancilla* (Heath, Cranton, Ltd.), the people do not feel the need for great armaments or colossal factories or roaring machinery, or the Stock Exchange or wireless telegraphy, or the cinema. Deprived of all these triumphs of modern progress, the people living in those sheltered places where the afterglow of the middle ages still lingers, appear to possess one priceless gift beyond all that modern "progress" has conquered, i.e., the great gift of laughter—not the laughter of our cities, so frayed and disillusioned, but a laughter as spontaneous and natural as the welling of the waters in a spring, or the joyance of the leaves in summer. To the jaded modern taste, avid of new sensations, that old world would, no doubt, be labelled "tiresome" and "uninteresting," and yet if our moderns could only look deep enough they would see that the middle ages, and those places which still retain their essential spirit, are the custodians of something more valuable than all the machinery of modern pleasure, and that something is called happiness. For happiness is a state, not a mood, a condition of being, not an endless pursuit of the wandering fires of pleasure. It has its roots not in reason, but in faith, not in the conquest of the air or the earth, but in the conquest of oneself, not in an unbridled individualism expressed in the formula, "the survival of the fittest," but in the cultivation of sweet and human relations between all the members of the community. How wistful is the contrast between modern industrialism, with Mammon throned in the market-place, and the Latin simplicity which Father Rope evokes in these verses:

Where lonely Rocca Priora

Her cloud-high mountain crowns,
And her bells come pealing downwards

O'er plains the white mist drowns

On the morn of Easter Tuesday in remote Italian towns;

The guilds of glad devotion,
The high rood-tokens bear;
Man, woman, child accordant
Fall swift a-knee in prayer,
And the King comes forth and blesses His people of the hills—
Where life's ways and needs are simple,
And dedicate with prayer,
Where the past is held in honour,
And men nor heed nor care
For the chatter of changeful worldlings in the cities o'er the hills;
Where the rood stands by the roadway,
And overlooks the rising corn,
And the smoke of Mammon's altars
Pollutes not eve or morn,
But the sunlight, clouds, and breezes fill the circle of the hills.

This little book has no special application to Ireland, except as an incentive to the more jealous wardenship of her gifts of faith and simple, human conditions of living, and perhaps as a warning against the syren called the "spirit of the age." It may also provoke the inquiry whether the Catholic Church, which in Latin countries scatters beauty and magic over the countryside, is not a little too shy and reserved in Ireland, where we do not so often meet "the rood by the roadway, overlooking the rising corn." Father Rope's message is, however, mainly for those countries which have surrendered to the lust for gain and power, to the neglect of the essential interests of humanity.

A life scarce conscious of its toilsome goal,
And toil wherein the heart has little share,
A strain for some far-distant golden fruit,
And prizing not God's gifts of light and air.

There are many signs on the horizon that the great war which has changed so many things will be followed by a reaction towards the old ideals of simplicity and humanity. Even advanced Socialist thought in England has gone back to the old Catholic guilds for a true solution of that country's economic and social ills. Perhaps it may be given to Father Rope to see at least the dawn of the vision of a new "Merrie England":

And once again our land her robe shall don
Of golden corn and homely husbandry;
Yea, with glad thorps she shall be clad upon,
Beset with laughing stream and swaying tree.
At dawn and noon and eve Our Lady's bell
Shall ring the greeting of Saint Gabriel.

But Father Rope's true spiritual home is among "the little towns of Italy," whose very names are magical. Within the pages of his little book he has captured the lingering glamour of an age that even in its dying seems to be handing on a torch to the future. Those who love the spirit of Catholicism and its expression in homely surroundings will thank Father Rope for his little book.

HUGH A. MACCARTAN.

Doctor Dick.

By an IRISH DOCTOR.

AS I looked out from the window of the Castle Hotel at Conway, saw the rain pattering incessantly on roof and pavement, and the shadow of a November night creeping over the town, and compared the dreary outlook with the glowing fire in the old-fashioned dining-room, the sparkle of shaded lamps on silver and glass, and the comfortable dinner before me, I thanked my stars that for that day at least my scientific wanderings were ended.

When coming through the street I had been much impressed by the sight of an old Tudor mansion in an excellent state of preservation, called the Plas Mawr, and finding the waiter communicative and intelligent, I sought for some information concerning it, and was rewarded for my curiosity by finding that it had the reputation of being haunted, and had associated with it such a singular and mysterious catastrophe that I determined to fully investigate the matter before I journeyed further through the land of the leek.

The following is the story of the haunted house as told by the gossips of Conway:—

The seventeenth century was in its infancy on that chill November evening when the Lady Dorothy Wynne, stationed in the look-out tower of Plas Mawr, watched anxiously over the surrounding country for some indication of her husband's return from the wars. The night shadows came down over the hills, and the lights began to twinkle in the town, and at last, heartsore and weary, she caught up her little son in her arms and began to descend the staircase.

Her foot became entangled in her dress and she fell heavily down the steps, herself and the boy being seriously injured. Her cry of distress attracted the attention of the old house-keeper, who had her conveyed to a room next her own, and an urgent message sent to the family doctor. This room had a peculiar window for the reception of a lantern, and hence was known as the lantern room.

When the doctor arrived he did all in his power for the sufferers, explained the nature of each case to the old house-keeper, and as the mother seemed to be better, and another serious case demanded his attention, he felt justified in leaving, with the undertaking that he was to be sent for immediately again if any change for the worse was noticed. For the boy there was nothing to be done: he was unconscious, the base of his skull fractured, and blood slowly oozing from his ears.

Later on the mother developed serious abdominal symptoms, and the doctor was again hastily summoned. As he had not returned from the other case, his assistant, Doctor Dick, as he was affectionately and familiarly termed, at once returned with the messenger. Tradition says he was very small, but

extremely active and energetic; an ardent student, always poring over some musty volume, but unfortunately without much experience in professional work; and of a highly nervous temperament. The danger in which he found Lady Wynne and her boy, and the responsibility it entailed proved too much for him altogether.

He became terrified, muttered a few incoherent words, and made a sudden effort to get away to fetch his older and more experienced colleague; but the housekeeper, feeling almost distraught at the condition of her beloved mistress, pushed him back into the room and fastened the door securely. She then sent the most trustworthy retainer in the house for the old doctor, and lay down outside the door in a most pitiable state of anxiety. He never reached the doctor's house, and thirty years elapsed before he was seen again in Conway.

Soon the moaning in the lantern room was replaced by a dreadful silence, broken ever and anon by the wind howling through the great chimneys and passages of the castle. Then lightning began to flash above the sleeping town, thunder peals shook the firmament, the heavens opened in a furious deluge, and a tempest such as the inhabitants of Conway had never before experienced desolated North Wales. Her terror was increased when the portal bell began to toll, but summoning up the remnant of her courage she ran down the spiral staircase, and drawing the heavy bolt, admitted—not the old doctor, as she had prayed and hoped, but the dripping figure of Sir John Wynne.

In a few hurried words she explained to him what had happened, and when they reached the door of the lantern room unlocked the door herself and accompanied him into the dimly-lit chamber.

Doctor Dick was gone!

The lantern light showed the mother lifeless on the bed and a prematurely-born infant by her side, and the little boy dead on a couch near the window. But the little doctor had vanished as completely as if the earth had swallowed him up. With sword in hand, and the fury of despair in his heart, the knight ransacked every corner. It was useless. There was not the slightest trace of the fugitive.

Sir John pushed the housekeeper from the room, and all night long continued his wild search, with furious cries of rage and grief; but when the sun began to pierce the gloom above the hills silence again fell upon the fatal chamber. It was the silence of death, for when at last assistance arrived he, too, was found a corpse; suicide probably—died of a broken heart, the gossips say.

Many years passed away.

One day a strange craft crept round Llandudno and dropped anchor near Conway. The first man who stepped ashore, grizzled and bent and weather-beaten, turned out to be the retainer of Plas Mawr, who went to seek the old doctor on that tragic night of long ago. His story was that he was hardly out of the house when he was seized by a gang of sailors and

hurried away to a ship in the offing, where he was kept a close prisoner until the storm abated and they could beat out to sea. Since then he had wandered about the world, and had gradually accumulated some property in Jamaica, where he had resided for some years, but had finally decided to return to his native town to end his days under the shelter of his beloved Welsh hills.

Time after time it was reported that the figure of a little man in a brown suit was seen peering anxiously from the window of the lantern room. The pattering of footsteps was heard at night, when the most courageous had satisfied themselves that there was nothing earthly in the mansion.

It was believed by many that the caretaker, who in 1750 had hanged himself in the banqueting hall, had been impelled to the rash act by the dreadful moans and strange ravings which often disturbed the midnight silence. And at last no one would live in the cursed house, and the sole tenant was the uneasy ghost of the ill-fated little doctor.

As I smoked my cigar before retiring to rest I reflected with a smile that it was the eve of All Souls' night, when superstition says every spirit has power to roam the earth, so I could not possibly choose a better occasion for blossoming out in my new role of ghost-hunter. Did I believe in the existence of ghosts? I certainly believed in the existence of intelligent beings other than the human species, and would never deny the possibility of their visiting the earth; but I was firmly convinced that the majority of ghost stories were the product of misinterpreted natural phenomena—the results of imagination, mental telepathy, or of peculiar qualities inherent but usually unnoticed in common objects. I carefully thought out my plans, gaily decided that as I was a medical man I had nothing to fear from a kindred spirit, and before I was asleep had everything arranged to my satisfaction.

The Plas Mawr was often shown to visitors, but the caretakers at this period did not reside on the premises, which made my intended enterprise practicable.

Next evening, when the street grew dark, I left the hotel, explaining that I was going to spend the night with some friends and would return in the early morning, and, wrapped in a long black overcoat and with my cap pulled down well over my eyes, patiently waited in the shadow for a chance to enter the old house unseen by the gatekeeper. A sudden alarm in the street drew him from his cosy nook for a minute, and in half that time I had slipped through the gate, mounted a flight of steps to a terrace which led to the banqueting hall, and there quietly waited and listened.

No sound of pursuit. My entrance had passed unnoticed.

Before the guardian had locked up and left for the night I was busily engaged in exploring room after room by the light of a small electric torch. I had filled my cigar case and loaded my revolver, so I was quite prepared for any eventuality. When I arrived at the haunted room I found an opening

through the wall tapering inwards at the sides and top, with a small angular window projecting outwards from the face of the external wall. Here it was that the lantern was placed to light the courtyard below, and which showed the death-chamber to Sir John Wynne on the night of his sorrowful home-coming. Heavy timbers, black with age, supported the ceiling; the floor was of oak; the walls were decorated in some way that I was unable to distinguish in the uncertain light. One end of the chamber was almost entirely occupied by a great stone fireplace, and it was lit by a stone-mullioned lattice window.

I made myself as comfortable in the window seat as the circumstances permitted, and, lulled by the moan of the wind, fell into an uneasy slumber. I was awakened by the tolling of the midnight bell of the church tower, and feeling very cold and stiff and sore, mentally reviewed my position, and decided promptly that I was a fool to waste my time in trying to unravel an old woman's tale.

But what is that? No! no! that is neither the rats nor the wind. In a moment I am upright and with every sense awake, for a footstep sounds on the oaken floor, and now I hear it pattering from one corner to another and then rapidly from side to side. My courage deserts me, and I would give all I possess to be on the other side of the door. However, I steady myself sufficiently to flash the electric light around the room. Empty! And a grateful prayer goes up to God.

But that shadow!—it moves, it moves! And now—is it some dreadful hallucination?—distinctly I see the form of a little man in a dark suit groping wildly around the fireplace. On a sudden all fear leaves me, and drawing my revolver I empty barrel after barrel into the silent figure. The echoes of the detonations peal through the house above the roar of the wind; as they die away I rush to the fireplace and find—nothing! How vividly it all comes back to me as I write, even after so many years!

I searched the room, examined the floor, tapped the walls, and tried the door, which I had securely fastened on entering, but all in vain—I found nothing. I was about to give up the search in despair, when, as I moved towards the great fireplace, it suddenly flashed into my mind how the little doctor had escaped on that tragic night. The chimney!

My nerves were now in such a state of tension that I feared neither man nor devil, so quickly divesting myself of my outer garments I fastened the electric torch to my forehead and cautiously proceeded to climb the chimney. My gymnastic training stood me in good stead, and the slight projections at an angle gave me a trifling foothold, so after several unsuccessful efforts I managed to climb about ten feet. Then, to my delight, I found an opening in the stonework, through which I crawled into a small chamber about six feet square, and there lay down thoroughly exhausted.

To do so I was obliged to push aside some rubbish, as I thought at first, but feeling something round and hard under

my hand, I examined it and found it to be a human skull. I continued my investigations, but it is useless to go into gruesome details. My medical experience soon told me that the dessicated form in the rotten shreds of clothing was the long-lost fugitive. He had sought the only place of refuge open to him, and, breathing the poisonous gases, had fallen asleep to wake no more.

The search was ended. I lowered the poor remains reverently to the ground and tied them up in my big overcoat, and when the custodian opened the gate in the misty morning I stole quietly away, and without attracting anyone's attention got safely back to my bedroom in the hotel. Having packed the piteous vestige of humanity in a light case I visited the old sexton, and had an interview with him that was eminently satisfactory to both of us, and that night he buried in Conway churchyard a badly-preserved mummy belonging to an eccentric but generous travelling scientist, and never dreamt that he was laying in consecrated ground the mortal remains of poor little Doctor Dick.

I never heard that the spectre was seen again, and firmly believe that it has found at last the peace which it sought so long and so unavailingly.

A New Year Wish.

God strengthen you when crosses come to stay,
When shadows close around your heart and home;
God guide your soul when light seems far away,
And all the world's waves are white with foam.

God dower you with kind, consoling words
For wounded hearts with gloom and anguish filled;
Soft healing words to sing like little birds
With cheering voice, until the storm is stilled.

In body and in soul God keep you strong
To toil for Him and never fail through fear:
This is my wish, the burden of my song—
God bless you in the dawning of the year.

BRIAN O'HIGGINS.

New Year Resolutions.

At thirty, man suspects himself a fool;
 Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
 At fifty chides his infamous delay,
 Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
 In all the magnanimity of thought
 Resolves, and re-resolves, then dies the same.

THIS sentiment of the author of *Night Thoughts* has been taken as a text by hordes of humorous and quasi-humorous writers, contorted and battered with all the feeble force of their fatuous fireworks, until nowadays to a certain type of mind a reference to good resolutions is as mirth-provoking as are the hardy annuals like mothers-in-law and the new wife's pastries.

Take the average mentor who blossoms forth at the start of the year with his views on the good resolves which almost everybody is supposed to make as January approaches. He simply fastens on, as does a leech to a discoloured patch of flesh, to the view that none of these good intentions survive the test of even a little time. He depicts the tippler—who had on New Year's Day marvelled at the man who debased himself by the gratification of an imaginary or acquired thirst—making up for “lost time” long before the month's end, and wondering how he had ever survived that mad fortnight of abstemiousness. He paints the gentleman, whose firm resolve to devote all his spare time to useful pursuits has shrivelled up to nothingness before it saw a second Sunday, having a serious heart-to-heart talk with himself, and wondering quite solemnly whether life was worth the living if one could not do just what he pleased in his leisure moments. He ambles on in the way you know, and the chances are that he is quite pleased with himself at the naïve style in which he is tickling your fancy. He as often as not seems to think that there is something excruciatingly funny in it all.

But this brand of commentator generally assumes too much. He pretends to think that because a man wishes to do or not to do a certain thing he has thereby resolved on it. And in addition he has that peculiar range of vision which plainly discerns a funny side to failure. For of course there is no humour in the high ideals which materialise.

One of Meredith's creations was a gentleman who had a veritable thirst for hopeful views of the world, but no spiritual distillery of his own. And I'm afraid in regard to improving our worldly views and actions, most of us are in the same plight. We would like to do a good deal better, but somehow the way does not seem clear, and so it comes that somewhere about the end of the year we make vague and beautiful determinations and really enjoy the making of them. There

is something so peculiarly pleasant in making up one's mind to read nothing save the best thoughts of human genius, to adopt a deferential tone towards even those whom we can afford to treat with curtness, to eschew the luxuries without which we are positive we would actually be better, to get up and enjoy those early morning hours which we believe in our hearts are really the best part of the day, that we secretly wonder to ourselves why we have been blind so long to the subtle attractions of the less popular phases of these byways of life. But—like the gentleman who got up early one morning to feel so self-righteous all the forenoon and so sleepy through the afternoon that he never attempted thefeat again—one little trial suffices to alter our view-point—we wonder, we hesitate, we pause, and a lately-deserted groove has its old tenant under a new lease once more. Spirit has tried to hoist up the avoirdupois of flesh and failed, though we are not a little angry to find there is so much dead weight in that body of ours.

Like the hopeful and expectant master who sees his pupil of promise taking the way which leads to obscurity and the final quenching of that light once so radiant, we cannot escape from those unwelcome reminders that with just a particle more of attention at the critical stage,

The baby figure of the giant mass
 Of things to come at large,

might now be progressing with that same virile pace with which the hopeful start was made. It is not much consolation to try and persuade ourselves that we really put up too much of a spurt for a beginning, because the dominant truth remains that it wasn't exhaustion which compelled us to retire. The really exhausted man hasn't energy enough left to yawn—and we can always manage a fairly good yawn, stifled or unabashed.

With all its poor attempt of getting a laugh from a scarecrow, there is a modicum of wisdom of a sort in that story of the ne'er-do-well who announced his readiness to turn over a new leaf and his discovery that he hadn't a new one to turn over, having come to the last page in the book. For the end of all things creeps imperceptibly upon us, the end of our book, and the end of our ability to make good resolves, much less keep them. The unwilling horse that stops quarter way up the hill and by his policy of drift loses more ground while waiting than he gains in his spasmodic and half-hearted efforts at ascent, ultimately gives up in despair when it dawns upon him that his jerky efforts are worse than waste. He gives up, that is, if no goader is by: but the man with the whip is not far off, and he is usually of that sardonic type whose sympathy is in inverse ratio to the magnitude of any rendered but wasted effort. Yet we—who are our own masters in so far as most details of our particular driving is concerned—have often not even the sense to cross our vehicle on the

road to gain breath, as the careful driver rests his horse, and when our burden goes awheel down the slope we smile and sit atop to enjoy the short and dearly-bought ride to the bottom.

One thing you may take for granted. The man who tries to poke fun at the breaking of new year determination made a pretty poor attempt at living up to those he made himself—that is, if he ever decided on anything noble or commendable. And, after all, an attempt to improve is more to be admired than failure in the effort is to be grinned at. The chief thing is to keep the notion at the back of your mind that what you firmly resolve on you can ultimately effect, provided you are not half-hearted. But have no soured repinings. I know anyone can readily retort that it is poor advice to suggest that if you fail this year you can try again next year—for there may be no next year. Still, in one sense there is much in what John Oliver Hobbes wrote in *Love and the Soul-Hunters*: “There are no might-have-beens. There is what has been, what is; and to regret lost possibilities and anticipate probabilities is the vice of dreamers.” For our purpose the regretting of lost possibilities is far from a vice—provided always the regret is tinged with no suspicion of despair, but is rather of the type which stimulates to more solid determination when another opportunity is vouchsafed us.

And that chance for all of us is now. It is one thing to be conquered by the unexpected tests of a high resolve, another to be so faint-hearted at the thoughts of what terrible difficulties will cross your path that you shrink back into the old rut and point the arrows of your sarcasm at those who thought to do better than they actually could when the hour of trial came. See in your downfalls but a reason why you should gather all your forces for a greater effort and you may have cause to marvel at the results. For the taking of the bit between his teeth has often meant the winning of the race for many a steed. Only your poor-blooded horse gives up in sullenness when the first fence has proved a trifle higher than he thought.

There seems no great reason why we shouldn’t make good resolutions at other times than the beginning of the year. And there isn’t. Make a fresh one every time you find that your faith in the old one is dying, without waiting altogether for the test which might find you wanting, for the greatest source of strength lies often in a knowledge of your own weakness. Some stick to their theory that failure is conducive to failure, but the better advice is to use the experience gained in defeat for a new effort as soon as a chance may present itself.

Not a few people are disappointed with what they call their new year resolutions, and the manner in which they so ingloriously fail. But they really have not made resolutions at all. They have only made a wish! They think it would be quite a good idea if they could limit themselves to just one pipe a day, or could do that five-mile walk after tea that they know to be exactly what would keep them in form, or could

save every penny which they have hitherto been accustomed to spend thoughtlessly, but they never actually resolve on so doing. They have the thought safely put away at the back of their minds, but the first shot fired by habit brings them back to that old order which in this instance gives way to the new with great reluctance. It is more than possible that in many of these cases a new year’s resolution, if actually made, would have been kept as well. But be sure that you are not confusing your personal desires with your seriously-pondered resolves. For they seem most easy of confusion about the beginning of January—and nothing so much strengthens a wish as determination to have that wish fulfilled.

I would suggest that you make only two resolutions for this year. The first I leave to your own choice, which is a rather safe thing to do, because I fancy that most people know best what high ideal they are going to set themselves for the forthcoming year. It may be what you please, inasmuch as one that meets your case may have no meaning for your neighbour, and certainly your first thought will be for your weakest spot. But I crave to be allowed to name your second resolve for you, and I am almost sure you will not demur. It is: “Keep your first resolution.”

THOMAS KELLY.

“Blessed is He that Cometh.”

Spread for Thy coming, triumphant soul-lover,
Nearer, more needful than vesture can be,
My intimate being Thy glorious Passover
Waits, till Thy will ride unhindered o’er me.

Plucked from life’s garden, leaved branch, fruit and flowers,
Strewn in Thy pathway, or borne in Thy praise,
All that is in me or of me, my powers,
Combine in Thy honour Hosanna to raise!

Tears hast Thou shed over sin’s condemnation—
Now shall their virtue make judgment to cease;
Victim and priest of the new clean oblation,
Hide not the things that belong to my peace!

Enter my city! set wide is the portal—
Its children proclaim Thee as King and as Lord;
Its stones shall cry out to Thy advent immortal,
Its innermost shrine hail Thy Presence adored!

MOTHER ST. JEROME.

COIR NA TEINE.

Ír le Saeðealaib AN ČROS. Ír ari maité le hérinn a círtear amach i sáe mi agur ír cír cúnne beag fé leit AN a beit innti do'n tréam so bhril srláð 'na seforidcib CÉADÓ do'n Saeðilis-teanga srláða agur círionn, teanga na fó. raoi agur na mbáro, ari tréangá féin. Ír fada mé ag rmaoinead ari an scúnne reo ac so uti anoir ní raih ré i' m' cumar gairim-peile do cír amach do Saeðealaib na héríeann, roip os agur círionna, agur círpead do tábairt doib so leip teast agur ruih i'm'ceannta anro coir na teine tamallín sáe uile mi, cun so ndéanfarad círiont caom le céite ari na nroib so scúnneann Saeðeala tréir ionnta. Véir ariamán againn agur rsealta agur tomaireanna agur rean-focal agur a lán rudaí deara nae iao agur muna vérih speann agur pléiríup ari nroib ari anro againn ní lá fóir é.

‘Fáilte ’sur fíce so caom círion római, a cairde mo círde, roip círionna ’sur os !’

Agur nuair a vérih ríb ag teast ná déinid dearmad ari fóir móna an duine do tábairt lib anro cun an teine do beir comeád ari larað. Má tá véarra beag cumta agaih fóir féin nō rseilin bhrinn 'nbúr reub do cír ríb uair leat ! éigim, nō amhrán dear nō rean-focal nō raoi nō aon trágar fóro eile, círiond ag tríall ofm é agur beas bairdeas tib o círde. ’Séapto atá uam ná an teine beag ro atá larta agam do déanam com seal ran ari so bfeicread muinntir Éireann uile i agur so utioefaré o sáe áirde de'n tír cun ruih 'nári mears.

‘Síad na daoine óga i' m' atá uam 'ran scúnne reo, cé so bhril mle fáilte anro i scóinnidt róim sáe Saeðeala, SEODA bhoib ré os nō aorfa. Na daoine óga atá ag fáir ruair ÁR inbui atá tréir aca i ngsac nro a báinean leir an rean-SEAN. amhrí agur atá mear agur srláð aca ari fíordadib na nSaeðeala so leip—so mó-móib na h-amhráin agur na dánta do támis anuair círionn trír doréadair agur duibhón na mbliadán o na fili do cír Éire fé cail agur clú le binnear a nglóir fada.

Tá na h-amhráin agam ac tár na fili do cír iao imisté ari fírige na fírinn; ní fear dúnna céib iao a lán aca nō céró ari iao nō cao é an raígar raoisair do bí aca—a h-amhráin aca féin níor fáid fírionn aca 'na inbui ari imteadet doib o Éirinn—o'n utír 'a' utus ríad srláð slan uair. Fuaír ríad-ran bár ac mair na h-amhráin do cír ríad agur tár 'sá scánad againn-ne inbui tar éir na scéadta mbliadán. Naé círiont é ríin so mairéann náriuntact agur tár srláð so deo agur naé fíordi iao do mucusad nō do bhrúasad fé coir ? agur fíordair fóir, a cairde ! Tá fili óga ag éirige círionn inbui

anro i hérinn; fili so bhril binnear 'n-a nglóir agur srláð 'a' MÁTAIR 'n-a seforidcib agur amhrán 'sá scánad aca 'ran teanga céadna náir labair na fili le Róipin Duib i n-ailio. Agur ní bao al ná so ndéanfarad ríad clú na héríeann do méadú in na bliadantaib atá le teast. So neartuigis Dia iao so leip; so scúnur Sé mífnead agur doib 'n-a seforidcib, caoinear agur ceol 'n-a scainnt agur rmaointe móra, uairle 'n-a n-áigeanntaib. Cá bhríor duit-re, a leigcior óis, ac sur duine aca tú féin ? Bhril aon véarra beag deanta agat ? Má tá, cír círionn é agur déanfarad mé é do mear duit. Bfeidip so bfeicreá i scil Coir na Teine é.

DÁN Vean Ríagalta Saeðealaib i ndéanfarad na héríeann O'N do cum an dán beag dear ro ríl a bhráir ri bár, pojnt uairis. bliadanta o ríom. Ari deir Dé so raih a h-anam aroet !

Ó arius do céann tréit, a Éire, a ríor.

Cairt an tróim-ruan malluigte díot,

Tá'n ceo ari na ríalidé ag ríalp' of do cíonn,

Agur ríil nua ag corrúchad tríot !

Éirigis ruair, a srláð ! vérih círion le do círde,

féad do tréim-fír ag tríor ari do ron-ra,

Tá Dia móib leo—agur vérih Sé so deo—

Ag tréargairt do náim' fé 'n-a seoraid !

Ó éirigis ! ari labair i' d'ceangain binn féin,

Bí tú ró-fada i' d' toirt, a MÁTAIR !

Éirig ! tá éantair an ceoil binn ag glaoðad opt, a rúm,

Ari an srláð so seal ari do bántaib ;

Éirig ! 'sur ghuair opt i' d' bainriogain ari,

1 utéannata náriún na círionne,

Vérih coróim ari do céann fóir, ari ríosacht fé do ríasair,

Ari do cláirreac ag ríalpead a binnir !

GUÍDE So scúnur Dia ríat opprait so leip agur ari Éirinn i TO rít na bliadna nua; náir leigis Dia so vérih círde na CÉAD. círiont círde na bliadna ná vérih opprait ná ari aonine a báinean lib. Sin guíde o círde bhrí scárad.

muiris na móna.



A Literary Circle for Young Readers of "The Cross."

Conducted by FRANCIS.

RULES OF THE GUILD.

- I. *The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.*
- II. *The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity and truth; and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and guide.*
- III. *They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competitions will be held.*
- IV. *They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel*

1916, WITH its troubles and its tragedies, its sorrows and its glories, has passed away from our gaze into the mists wherein the dead years sleep, and 1917 is knocking at the door. What shall our greeting to her be? Shall we shrink away from her as one to be feared and loathed, as one who holds nothing good in store for us, or shall we reach out to her the hand of friendship and good cheer and bid her welcome as a sweet and kindly messenger of God, bearing tidings of peace and good-will to the warring nations of the earth, to those who seem to have forgotten Him in their blind rush for power and wealth, in their quest for bloodshed and slaughter?

O, let our greeting to the new year be one of friendliness and hope and kindness. Let us take her by the hand and walk

A Kindly Word. fearlessly with her in all her ways, and make the most we can of every day and hour she brings to us from the storehouse of God's mercy and love. Let us promise to aid her in making the world brighter and better and happier than it has been for the past couple of years, so that when she comes to say good-bye to us a twelve-month hence it may not be in sadness or repining, but radiantly and happily we shall speak to her, proud and glad in the consciousness of work well done. That each and every one of you may make this resolution and faithfully keep it, with God's good help, is the wish that lives this morning in the heart of **Francis**. God bless and strengthen all my young comrades of the Guild during the coming year and keep the sunshine of peace and kindness playing about their hearts and their homes!

I had been saying to myself that on account of the holidays and Christmas exams., and the excitement attendant upon both, my post bag would be rather empty this month. Imagine my surprise and delight, then, when the Editor

handed me the biggest bundle of letters I have received for months! Only one dear friend was absent, but I know her heart's wishes are with us in every hour. My blessing on the boys and girls who have given me so generously of their friendship! I must mention first of all the members whose letters did not reach me in time last month. They are **J. P. Cassidy**, **Kitty Doyle**, **Kathleen Hardy**, and **Mary O'Grady**. The latter's little essay was excellent, and it is a great pity she had the misfortune to be late. **Ellie Clarke** is a newcomer from the Presentation Convent, Drogheda, to whom I offer a very hearty welcome. **Winnie Finn** brings me five new members from St. Helens, in England, all of whom (including Winnie) have written letters that are a joy and delight to me. Their names are **Doris Ashton**, **Frances Howarth**, **Ursula Morris**, **bridget McDermott**, and **Mary McHale**. I need hardly say they are welcome, and that I am deeply grateful for all their good wishes. I hope to hear from them every month in future. Another friend of mine in St. Helens (what a host of friends I have there now!)—**Hilda Ashcroft**—has been out on a recruiting expedition also and introduces three new members—**Flora McDonald** (an historic name), **Annie Howarth**, and **Alice Hilton**, who are welcome as the berries of the Christmas holly. From the delightful letter written by Hilda I can gather that my dear friend, **Mary Rennie**, has been working hard in her own sweet way for Blessed Gabriel in St. Helens. God bless her and all her young comrades, and give them every wish of their hearts in the new year! Another new friend in the Marist Convent School, Carrick-on-Shannon. Her name is **Kathleen Doyle**, and she is as welcome as were her school companions last month. She missed being welcomed along with them through being absent from school. Two very nice letters have been written to me from Carrick also by **Emma Coniff** and her sister **Josephine**. The latter has told me something (it is a dead secret until she gives me permission to reveal it) that sets my heart bounding with joy every time I think of it. God's best and sweetest reward be her share and that of her companions in the new year! From other famous schools—the Convent of St. Louis, Carrickmacross, Presentation Convent, Drogheda, and Presentation Convent, Athenry—bulky envelopes have come again this month, and the spirit of the letters and essays contained in them have made me feel that while Eire has such daughters to remember her and her martyred dead, her foes can never overwhelm or defeat her. **Agnes Treanor** promises me a big influx of new members from Carrickmacross during the next few months. They will be as welcome as she is herself to-day. **Rita Carlos** having heard I "like the Westerns," comes to me from Ballina with a merry smile and demands admittance. She is welcome, and she is right when she says I like the Westerns. So also do I like (nay love) the Northerns and the Southerns and the Easterns, and every Gael who is true to our Mother Eire. And she will even see by this month's Guild that I have love and friendship also for those members who, though not of our race, have reached us the hand of friendship across the sea and are united with us under the mantle of our dear patron, Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows. Among my letters there is a welcome one from my old friend, **Proinsias Mac Thighearnain**, in the course of which he says: "This year Christmas is sad for all or nearly all, but perhaps it is better so. It will bring nearer to our minds the dread realities of the first Christmas Day, which are sometimes likely to be forgotten amidst the festivities. It is a sad Christmas for the mothers of the men who lost their lives fighting for their country at Easter, but it can be no more sorrowful for them than was the first Christmas following the greatest of all sacrifices for her who lost her Son and her Friend, her God and her all." It is surely good to be able to award a prize when you receive such a letter of acknowledgment as **Mary Rennie** has written this month. I wish I could quote it in full. Here is the concluding paragraph: "On Christmas morning when I kneel before the humble Crib of the Child-God, I will ask Him to bless you, in return for all your generosity and kindness to me, and also to give you the grace necessary to enable you to carry on this great work for many a long year to come." And may He bless the sender of that wish and every young heart that has prayed for **Francis** at the Crib of the Christ-Child! Listen to this from another little English member, **Alice Holt** (also of St. Helens): "You've no idea of how proud we were when we got to know that Mary Rennie had won the prize. Her essay was very fine, and all the class had a scramble to get hold of it to read. If you'd seen the way we all devoured it (not the book, of course). Her prize, too ('Glenanaar'), was lovely. I've

just commenced to read it now, and oh! how I love tales of Irish life. My one ambition is to visit Ireland. One of these holidays I'll be landing on Erin's sunny shore, and how delighted will I be that day. One place above all that I'd love to visit is St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg. My two aunts visited it last summer, whilst staying in Derry, and they never tire speaking of it. My mother's relations are really Irish, you know, but when I proudly relate this fact in class, the others laugh and ask who ever heard of an Irish girl with an English name like 'Alice Holt.' You will be interested to know, Alice, that one of the bravest of the "rebels" who fought for the freedom of Ireland in 1798 was named Joseph Holt. See will they laugh at you in class when you tell them that fact. Your friend **Mabel Gaskell** is heartily welcome. And very many thanks for your pretty Christmas card and your promise to pray for me. From **Eibhlis Seoighe** comes an exceptionally nice greeting card and a wish as warm as any Irish heart could yearn for or express. I wish I could accept her generous invitation; perhaps I may be able to do so some day. I was well pleased with the nice letters from **Lizzie Malone** and her brother **Edward**. They are two friends of whom I am very proud. Two nice little letters came also from **Bessie** and **John G. Reid**. Yes; Bessie must get five new members before she can receive a badge—that is four more along with her brother, whom I welcome this month. **Ada O'Neill**, of Drogheda, is a bit of a humorist. She writes: "I hope our delightful attempts at composition will not drive away your Christmas appetite—though perchance a mystical person such as you lives on air." Then she utters an awful threat. "The Carrick-on-Shannon people need not flatter themselves with the idea that they will succeed in outrivalling us. We will take a leaf out of the politicians' book and resort to conscripting new members before we see Drogheda take a back seat in the Guild." Now, Carrick! I was glad to learn that fifteen of my Drogheda friends have recently been admitted to the Children of Mary Sodality. I can imagine their happiness on that memorable day. I had only just finished reading Ada's threat when up came a list of new members from Carrick-on-Shannon, officered by **May Shanley**, who also returns thanks for her prize volume. Her recruits are **Mary Dolan**, **Nora Breheny**, **Aggie Malloy**, **Mollie Mulvey**, **Gretta Carter**, **May Doherty**, **Lillie B. Mulvey**, **Lillie Moreton**, **Eveleen Crofton**, **Lizzie McGovern**, **Brigid Coniff**, **Mary J. Rooney**, **Kathleen Doyle**, **Aggie Gorman**, **Katie Beattie**, **Mary Feely**, **Jane McCabe**, **Lena Coles**, **Mary E. Rourke**, **Mary B. Crofton**, **Annie Breheny**. A thousand welcomes to them, one and all. Now, Drogheda! Thanks to my old friend **Chrissie Burke** for her beautiful letter and greeting card. I wish her every blessing and gift in the year that is at our door. From the Convent of Notre Dame, St. Helens, comes another new friend in the person of **Marie Rigby**, who writes me a very nice, friendly letter and sends me a hearty greeting. She is welcome for her friend's sake and for her own. My big host of friends in Harold's Cross, Dublin, increases from month to month. I have great pleasure in welcoming **Margaret Philomena Keogh** and adding her name to the list. Letters and greeting cards have also come to me from **Bridie** and **Chrissie Sweeney**, **Ada O'Neill**, **Mary Kate Heavey** (who has reached the 12th milestone and will compete in future with the senior members), **Nellie Rennie**, **C. Willcock**, **Julia M. Kennedy**, **Katie Doyle**, **Kathleen McCloskey**, **Katie Doyle**, and **Mollie Joyce**.

The Editor has just told me that he is starting an Irish Page in this month's issue of "**The Cross**." I bespeak for it
Good News! mile failte from the many members of the Guild who are students of our own beautiful language. I am eagerly watching out for it myself.

The badge, bearing the portrait of Blessed Gabriel, which is awarded to the member bringing five recruits into the Guild, **Badge Winners.** goes to **Winnie Finn**, 152 Rivington Road, St. Helens, England, and four badges are to be sent to the **Marist Convent School**, Carrick-on-Shannon, to be cut for by this month's new recruits.

All newcomers will please write a personal note to **Francis**, apart from their competition papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild. **Important.** **Always put your name and address on your competition paper**, whether you send a letter or not.

There was an almost record entry in the competitions, and the work on the whole reached a high standard of excellence. For **The Awards.** the best essay on "The Old Year and the New" the prize has been awarded to **Rita Carlos**, 7 Convent Terrace, Ballina, Co. Mayo. Exceptionally good work was done by Eibhlin Ni Raghallaigh, Mary E. Flannery, Lillie Lynch, Brigid Carley, Mary T. Hynes, Mary K. Heavey, May McDermott, May Costello, Julia F. O'Regan, Annie Clasby, Cecilia Gaines, Mary J. Gaines, Nora Kearney, May Kearney, Birdie Callanan, May O'Grady, Mary J. Loftus, Katie Doyle, Brigid McCloskey, Margaret P. Keogh, Kathleen McCloskey, Agnes Treanor, Kathleen Doyle, Hilda Ashcroft, Winnie Finn, Ada O'Neill, Lillie Duffy, Daisy Flanagan, Anna M. Carton, May Carroll, Nancy Dolan, Maisie O'Beirne, L. Whitehead, Kitty Boylan, Lucy Leonard, Francis C. Sheridan, Julia O'Brien, Mary F. McLeer, Seosaimhin Ni Chuilinn, May Brannigan, and K. Mulholland. I regret to have to say that one competitor (**who should have known better**) sent in as her own work an article copied wholesale from another Dublin magazine. Has she any explanation to offer?

A mighty entry here also. I am sorry that want of space will not allow me to publish the names of all those who gave me such pleasure in the reading of their wishes. The work of **every single competitor** was good. I have awarded the prize to **Kathleen Flanagan**, 71 Fitzwilliam Lane, Dublin, whose three New Year wishes are for her mother, the best friend she has in the world.

OUR NEXT COMPETITION.

For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

A handsome book prize will be awarded for the best essay on "The Feasts of February."

For members under 12 years of age.

A handsome book prize will be given for the best little story of St. Brigid. I trust the entry will be just as large as it has been this month.

All competitors will please remember the following rules:—All competition papers must be certified by some responsible person as being the **unaided** and **original work** of the competitors. They must have attached to them the coupon which will be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family), and must be written on one side only of the paper. They must be sent so as to reach the office not later than January 14th. All letters to be addressed:—**Francis**, c/o "**The Cross**," St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin.

PRIZE ESSAY.

The Old Year and the New.

The last days of the old year are stealing softly and swiftly away, adding still another to those years which have already glided down the river of time, and which no human voice can ever recall. Soon the dawn of another year shall greet us, and we shall linger on the threshold where the old year meets the new. Once again various thoughts, both sweet and sad, shall stir in the hearts of mankind. Solemn fancies and ideas shall at first hold sway, for who can fail to be moved to regret by the death of the old year, which began its short life amidst such gladness and rejoicing as now awaits the birth of the fast-approaching new year?

When the midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead,

it occurs to us with singular and deep significance that the old year is no more, and that henceforth it will be numbered among the ages of the past. We look back upon it with its various fortunes and many vicissitudes. We recollect the many hopes and desires yet unfulfilled, which we fondly cherished. We remember all our disappointed dreams—

Dreams that the soul of youth engage,
Ere fancy has been quelled.

When pursuing thus a gloomy and regretful train of thought, the thought of the new year strikes a glad chord in our hearts and banishes all despondency. Just for a moment, perhaps, we are inclined to think the coming year may have bitter trials in store for us, but the air of peace and joy, peculiar to the new year, drives away all care. We are filled with such gladness and happiness in looking forward to the future that we admit the old year has brought us many joys intermingled with its sorrows—giving us the “bitter of the sweet.” So merry and light-hearted do we become that we involuntarily think of that happiness which has no end, and exclaim with Tennyson—

The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Many people afflicted with trouble look to the new year to lighten their sorrows, and to bring them brighter and happier days. Those who have as yet only seen the rosy hue of life look forward confidently to joy and happiness in store for them. People who have reached the winter of their life welcome the new year as perhaps the last one they may spend on earth, and think with ineffable joy of the many they shall spend in the better land. The new year reminds everyone of the advent of spring and the re-awakening of nature to all her verdant beauty, and so all people look forward to it hopefully and trustfully.

Thus in regretting the old year, which reminds us of the swift flight of time, we can afford to give a real “cead mile failte” to the new. Although the past year may have brought care and sorrow, we can hail the advent of the new with “one equal temper of heroic hearts”; we can look forward with joy and gladness in our hearts to whatever the future may bring—joy or sorrow, success or failure—and we can exemplify the words of a great statesman: “Think not of the past; it cannot come back; face the dim and shadowy future with a brave and manly heart.”

Rita Carlos.

In Thanksgiving, Etc.

Sr. M. Philomena (Roscommon) has forwarded us a number of donations amounting to 16/- from various clients of Blessed Gabriel towards the expenses of his Canonization: From a lady, 10/-, in thanksgiving for a great favour received through the intercession of Blessed Gabriel; from Mrs. F., 3/-, for similar intention; from a young girl who is asking Blessed Gabriel to obtain a situation for her, 1/-; and from another client, 2/- in thanksgiving.

Per **Fr. Alban (Glasgow)**, ten shillings from Miss Donohoe, and two shillings from Miss Thompson have been received towards the Cause of Gemma Galgani.

K. Clarke sends two shillings and sixpence towards Cause of Gemma Galgani and the Little Flower.

The above donations, for which we are sincerely grateful, will be duly forwarded to the Postulator at Rome.

Contributions towards the expenses of the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani and favours received through their intercession will be gladly acknowledged in these pages.

TO OUR PROMOTERS.—In answer to inquiries made from time to time we think it well to let supporters of this magazine know that all our supporters and promoters participate in the benefit of four hundred and thirty-four Masses, specially offered every year for benefactors by the Fathers of this Province, as well as in the prayers, penances and good works performed daily by all the members of the Congregation of the Passion.